

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 27, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner,

As members of the New England Congressional Delegation, we urge you to bring a clean Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding bill for the remainder of the fiscal year to the Floor without delay. With funding for DHS and its sub-agencies set to expire at midnight tonight, the risk to our national security is unacceptable and unnecessary. In New England, which has experienced historic winter weather over the last two months, our challenges will be further compounded with a shutdown of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

We are disheartened by the oft-repeated comments that a shutdown will not have a significant impact because many DHS employees are deemed 'essential' and would not be furloughed in the event of a shutdown. While many security agents may remain on the job, other employees critical to the functioning of the agency will be furloughed. This result would jeopardize the agency's ability to respond or assist in the event of an emergency.

As New England recovers from snowstorms that have shut down our cities, crippled public transportation, and severely damaged public infrastructure, a shutdown of DHS and FEMA would prevent the agency from reviewing, processing, and ultimately approving a disaster declaration for the region. Such a declaration would provide much needed federal support for recovery efforts.

Winter Storm Juno, which hit New England between January 26th and January 28th, left more than 50 locations across six states reporting more than 30 inches of snowfall. In Massachusetts, Worcester recorded its all-time heaviest snowstorm with 34.5 inches, Nantucket lost all power and reported wind gusts of up to 78 miles per hour meeting the strength of a minor hurricane, and Marshfield suffered significant flooding and seawall breaches. Providence, Rhode Island and Portland, Maine both experienced near heaviest snowstorms on record with over 19 inches and 23 inches of snow accumulation respectively. Schools in Epping and Newton, New Hampshire have been forced to close due to structural integrity issues related to significant amounts of snowfall; and Thompson, Connecticut reached 33.5 inches of snow.

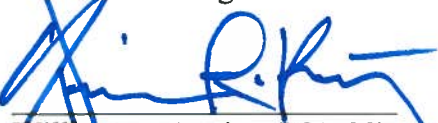
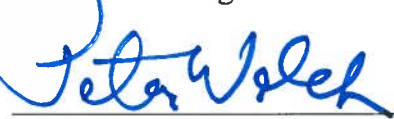

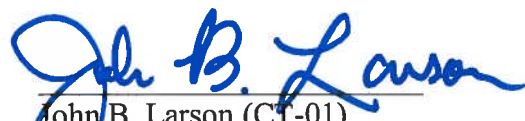

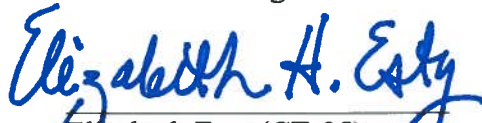
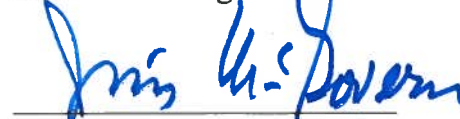
Our states have worked closely with FEMA Administrator W. Craig Fugate over the last several weeks to prepare his agency for a forthcoming request for a Presidential Disaster Declaration for Public Assistance; the agency graciously granted Massachusetts an extension for submitting a

Preliminary Damage Assessment. However, the Administrator has stated in the event of a shutdown, whether tonight or three weeks from now, the agency cannot process any requests for assistance and send them to the President for his approval.

The communities in New England are not alone. Earlier this week, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Alabama all declared winter weather states of emergency. Payments scheduled to be sent to states and localities still recovering from emergency events, such as Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, may not go out. Further, DHS will be limited in their ability to respond to the next natural disaster by not having appropriate staff in place. As Administrator Fugate put it, "earthquakes have no season."

Mr. Speaker, we cannot let politics stand in the way of protecting our country. We urge you to bring a clean, long-term DHS funding bill to the floor immediately so we can ensure communities across the country are not left unprotected and unassisted.

Sincerely,


Richard E. Neal (MA-01)
Member of Congress
William R. Keating (MA-09)
Member of Congress
Peter Welch (VT-At Large)
Member of Congress
Katherine Clark (MA-05)
Member of Congress
John B. Larson (CT-01)
Member of Congress
David N. Cicilline (RI-01)
Member of Congress
Joseph P. Kennedy, III (MA-04)
Member of Congress
Elizabeth Esty (CT-05)
Member of Congress
James P. McGovern (MA-02)
Member of Congress
James R. Langevin (RI-02)
Member of Congress
Chellie Pingree (ME-01)
Member of Congress
James A. Himes (CT-04)
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro (CT-03)
Member of Congress



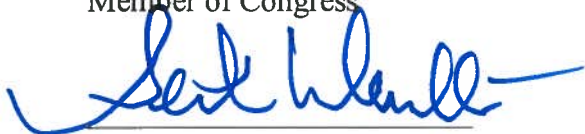
Stephen F. Lynch (MA-08)
Member of Congress



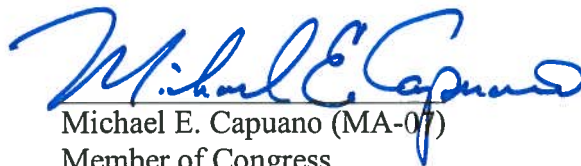
Niki Tsongas (MA-05)
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney (CT-02)
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton (MA-06)
Member of Congress



Michael E. Capuano (MA-07)
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster (NH-01)
Member of Congress